

Educational Services Committee
7 November 2006

IRVINE, 7 November 2006 - At a Meeting of the Educational Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 pm.

Present

Jacqueline Browne, Donald Reid, Thomas Barr, Drew Duncan, Jane Gorman, Jean Highgate, Margaret McDougall, Father Matthew McManus, Elsbethe Marshall, Rev Sandy Montgomerie, David Munn, David O'Neill, John Scott, Elaine Shaw, Gordon Smith and Nan Wallace.

In Attendance

J Tavers, Corporate Director, J Tulips, Project Team Leader, J Ward and J Leckie, Heads of Service, B Neilly and G Johnstone, Quality Improvement Managers, N McCrone, Cultural Services Manager and E Allan, Head of St Matthew's Academy (Educational Services); H Hunter, Finance Manager (Finance); G Lawson, Head of Corporate and Democratic Support, A Wattie, Communications Officer and P Shiach, Corporate and Democratic Support Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor Browne in the Chair

Apologies for Absence

Peter McNamara, Gordon Allison, John Reid and Richard Wilkinson

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 20 September 2006, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Educational Services Standing Sub Committee

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix ES1) being the Minutes of the Meeting of the Educational Services Standing Sub Committee held on 11 October 2006.

The Committee agreed to approve the Minutes.

3. Educational Services Budget 2006/07: Budgetary Control

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) on the budgetary control position for Educational Services at the end of September 2006 and projections for the financial year 2006/07.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the year end projected overspend based on current information; and (b) that the Corporate Director take the necessary action to bring the budget back on target.

4. Review of Agreement with North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL)

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the main outcomes expected from North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL) in the context of the Council's Strategy for Physical Activity, Sport and Health.

North Ayrshire Council, in partnership with NALL, Sportscotland and Ayrshire and Arran NHS produced a Strategy for Physical Activity, Sport and Health, which focussed on 3 main areas viz:-

- facilities and facility issues
- school sport and physical activity
- coach volunteer and player development

Significant developments have taken place in relation to aims 1 and 2 of the Strategy however the area of coach, volunteer and player development has proven to be more challenging. Proposals to enhance this aspect of the Strategy were contained within the report.

The Committee agreed to (a) confirm the Council's aspirations as set out in the Strategy for Physical Activity, Sport and Health; (b) request that NALL review its support for this Strategy; and (c) seek a higher priority for coach, volunteer and player development in NALL's next business plan.

5. Joint Provision with Cumbrae Development Company

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the joint provision of an all-weather playing facility with the Cumbrae Development Company.

The Educational Services Committee previously approved the erection of an all weather sports playing field at Cumbrae Primary School. However due to the restricted nature of the site, it has not proved possible to build the facility within the school boundary.

Subsequent discussions have taken place with the Cumbrae Development Company with a view to restoring Garrison House and re-locating the pitch within the boundary of the property. A joint venture with the local tennis club has also been discussed which would involve the submission of an application for external funding to provide enhanced facilities at Garrison for use by both the school and the community.

Financial provision for the creation of an all weather pitch for Cumbrae Primary School is contained within the Council's capital programme, and could be used as match funding to attract additional resources to provide, in addition to the proposed facility, all weather tennis courts within the grounds of the Garrison, Millport.

The report proposed that a joint funding and management approach with Cumbrae Development Company and the local tennis club be further explored with a view to supporting this joint initiative.

The Committee agreed (a) in principle to a joint approach to the provision of an all-weather sports facility on the island of Cumbrae; and (b) to hold discussions with the Cumbrae Development Company and the local tennis club with a view to achieving enhanced school and community facilities on the island.

6. Vocational Education and School-College Initiatives

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on progress in implementing Vocational Education and School-College Initiatives.

In May 2005 the Scottish Executive published a document, "Lifelong Partners - Scotland's Schools and Colleges Building the Foundations of a Lifelong Learning Society" which outlined national development plans and identified good practice in school/college collaboration. A number of arrangements including formal partnership working and agreed protocols are in place and involve James Watt College, Kilmarnock College, North Ayrshire Council Personnel, Catering and Cleaning and Educational Services.

The School-College Strategy Group is responsible for developing a strategic approach to extending the range of curriculum provision available to 14-18 year olds in North Ayrshire. The report detailed progress in taking forward both the Post 14 Vocational Education Programme (VEP) and the Post 16 School-College Transition Programme (SCIP) since August 2006. Appendices to the report contained details of participating schools and numbers of pupils involved in the Post 14 VEP, as well as course delivery and pupil participation in Post 16 SCTP.

Discussions are currently ongoing with James Watt College, Careers Scotland, Kilmarnock College and South and East Ayrshire Councils with a view to developing a sustainable programme of Post 14 work-based vocational learning provision for beyond March 2008 when current Scottish Executive funding is due to end.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the steps taken to implement Vocational Education and School-College Initiatives; (b) to approve the expansion of opportunities for participation in these initiatives; and (c) to submit progress reports in due course.

7. St Matthew's Academy: Progress with Merger

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on progress towards the merger of St Andrew's Academy and St Michael's Academy to form St Matthew's Academy.

St Matthew's Academy will begin operating as a school in August 2007. The Head teacher has been appointed and a management structure developed to allow the identification of all promoted post holders to take place by December 2006.

The report highlighted the work that has been undertaken to date in relation to the development of a curricular framework, accommodation, transition arrangements and joint pupil activities. Preparatory planning for the merger will incur costs of £118.00, which will be provided from Council balances as agreed by the Corporate Policy Committee on 24 October 2006.

The Committee agreed (a) to approve the steps taken in preparation for the merger; and (b) to receive further progress reports.

8. A Curriculum for Excellence

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the progress made in implementing a Curriculum for Excellence in North Ayrshire.

A Curriculum for Excellence (ACfE) was published by the Scottish Executive in 2004 and provided values purposes and principles for the education of young people between the ages of 3 and 18.

A Curriculum for Excellence Steering Group has been established in North Ayrshire and all schools are encouraged to participate in development work through the ACfE national register of interest. An action Plan has been developed which will focus on cross-curricular and multi-disciplinary learning and in-service briefings for staff. The three Ayrshire Councils have also been successful in securing £84,700 funding from the Scottish Executive to undertake joint working and details of the joint initiatives to be taken forward were contained within the report. Further funding of £10,300 has been secured in relation to a joint initiative with West Dunbartonshire Council targeting ICT support for nursery and primary 1 pupils.

The Committee agreed to approve (a) the developments to support A Curriculum for Excellence; and (b) the joint initiatives in co-operation with East and South Ayrshire and with West Dunbartonshire.

9. Energy Efficiency in Schools

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the work of the Energy Agency in North Ayrshire schools.

The Energy Agency is a registered charity established in 1999 and is part of a network of Energy Efficiency Advice Centres in the UK.

During 2005/06 Technical Services carried out an audit of energy consumption in a pilot group of 33 primary schools, which were given an energy efficiency grading between A (best) and G (worst). This grading was included in a Building Utility Action plan provided to schools suggesting ways of saving energy.

Energy lessons and games offered by the Energy Agency have been undertaken by primary 6 and 7 pupils in 61 primary schools since August 2004, and cover topics including conventional energy production, renewable energy and energy efficiency. School evaluations of the work of the Energy Agency are overwhelmingly positive with many schools re-booking. Technical Services paid for this work with match funding from each school of £60.

The Committee agreed to continue co-operation with the Energy Agency to raise awareness of energy efficiency in North Ayrshire schools.

10. Partnership with Scottish Opera

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on current and proposed partnership projects with Scottish Opera.

Scottish Opera and North Ayrshire have successfully collaborated on six joint ventures that have attracted national and international acclaim.

Two new initiatives, "Create an Opera" and "Languages in Opera" were detailed in the report with work on both productions taking place between March and June 2007. The productions will be shown in the Harbour Arts Centre in June 2007.

The initiatives have been funded from external funding and core budgets, with Languages in Opera supported by a Scottish Executive grant.

The Committee agreed (a) note the current Create an Opera initiative; and (b) approve proposals for a Languages in Opera project.

11. Disability Equality Scheme

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the development of the Council's Disability Equalities Scheme and the specific requirement for Educational Services to provide a scheme for the education functions of the Authority.

North Ayrshire Council requires to publish a Disabilities Equalities Scheme by 4 December 2006. In this regard, Educational Services has a statutory requirement to provide a scheme for educational functions, employment, services to parents and non-educational services to the wider community.

The reports summarised the current position and proposed that the Educational Disability Equality Scheme should describe the following: -

- how Educational Services will involve disabled children and young people in its development;
- how the impact of these policies and functions will be assessed
- how the Department will comply with the new disability equality duty; and
- how information on the effects of these policies and practices will be gathered.

It is intended that guidance be produced for schools on impact assessment which will incorporate the Race Equality Duty, the Disability Equality Duty and the Gender Equality Duty which comes into force on 1 April 2007.

The report further highlighted the implications for schools in promoting organisational change to ensure that disability equality is taken into account in all of their activities. No additional funding has been provided to support authorities implement the Scheme.

The Committee agreed to (a) the Education Disabilities Equalities Scheme forming a sub-section of the Corporate Disability Equalities Scheme; (b) remit detailed consideration of the content of the Disability Equalities Scheme to the Corporate Policy Standing Sub-Committee; and (c) remit to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to approve the final scheme by 4 December 2006.

12. Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on a revision of the Charter Aims of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.

The Joint Committee for the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park previously authorised the Regional Park Manager to enter into a consultation process with stakeholders on a review of the Charter Aims

Arising from the outcome of the consultation process, it is proposed that the Charter Aims of the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park consist of the following: -

- to conserve and enhance the beauty, biodiversity and cultural heritage of Clyde Muirshiel Park;
- to encourage and enable learning, understanding and enjoyment of Clyde Muirshiel Park; and
- to promote and foster environmentally sustainable development for the social and economic well being of the people and communities with the Muirshiel Park area.

The Committee agreed to the adoption of a revised set of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Charter Aims.

13. HMIE Report: Prinmill Primary School

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the HMIE Report on Pirnmill Primary School.

The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages and the inspectors evaluated learning, teaching and achievement and how well pupils are supported.

The inspection report was published on 10 October 2006 and highlights key strengths within the school as well as areas requiring attention. Appropriate action will be taken to address the recommendations arising from the report and progress will be monitored.

The Committee agreed to (a) approve the proposals made to address the key points for action in the inspection report; and (b) note the arrangements for follow-through.

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm.

Educational Services Committee
07/11/2006

Appendix No
ES1

Educational Services Standing Sub Committee
11 October 2006

IRVINE, 11 October 2006 - At a Meeting of the Educational Services Standing Sub Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 pm.

Present

Jacqueline Browne, Jean Highgate, Elaine Shaw and John Scott.

In Attendance

J Leckie, and J Ward, Heads of Service and M McLarty, Quality Improvement Manager and G Syme, Quality Improvement Officer (Educational Services); and P Shiach and E Fisher, Corporate and Democratic Support Officers (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor Browne in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Drew Duncan, Peter McNamara, John Reid and Donald Reid.

1. Irvine Library Monitoring Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the impact of the new Irvine Library which opened on 27 June 2006.

The library, which has been well received by the public, has a number of new features. These have proved successful and this is reflected in a number of indicators which report on an increase in borrowing activity and represent a significant impact when compared to the corresponding period in 2005:-

- Adult book issues by 28%
- Children's book issues by 63%
- Computer issues by 26%

Detailed statistics for July to September 2006 were detailed at Appendix 1 and a selection of written customer comments detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Sub Committee agreed to (a) note the significant impact of this facility; and (b) receive further progress reports on the impact of the library.

2. NEET Statistics for North Ayrshire

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the numbers of young people aged 16-19 in North Ayrshire who fall into the NEET category (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

At its meeting on 20 September 2006 the Educational Services Committee approved a report providing broad data on the NEET group and agreed to proposals for developing a NEET Strategy for North Ayrshire. The Scottish Executive provided statistics for each local authority and North Ayrshire's statistics were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

Action Plans are to be developed to address the needs of this group and establish targets and procedures for monitoring and reporting on progress. These require to be submitted to the Scottish Executive by the end of October 2006.

An audit has been undertaken of current programmes designed to support young people at risk of becoming NEET and those already NEET. This information will be used along with the North Ayrshire NEET Statistics to establish local targets for NEET avoidance and reduction.

The Sub Committee agreed to receive monitoring reports on the achievement of targets.

3. Primary PE Project: Progress Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on progress made by the Primary School PE Pilot Project in North Ayrshire.

The Physical Education Review Group Report set out a number of recommendations and key challenges around the future direction of physical education in Scottish Schools. These were detailed in the Appendix to the report.

The Scottish Executive in June 2005 offered funding to pilot possible solutions to key challenges identified by the Physical Education Review Group. North Ayrshire was one of 6 successful pilot projects funded across Scotland. The North Ayrshire Pilot focussed on 3 of the challenges facing local authorities, namely:-

- development of the quality of Physical Education delivered in the primary school;
- a systematic support for primary schools by physical education specialists; and
- effective and strategic use of additional PE staff to support development.

To date progress achieved has been:-

- establishing a clear role for the PR specialist in the primary school;
- making full use of the expertise of the primary class teacher
- developing support that is systematic and focussed on the needs of the individual;
- developing a career pathway leading to "professional recognition" in primary PE; and
- identifying and developing teachers for future programmes.

The pilot scheme is being extended for a further year with a view to impacting further on the quality of PE provision for younger pupils.

The Sub Committee agreed (a) to note the progress made during the first year of the pilot project; and (b) to receive a report on the project next year.

4. Active Schools: Progress Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the progress made by the Active Schools Programme during 2004/05 in increasing the levels of physical activity of young people in North Ayrshire schools.

The Active Schools Programme was launched in North Ayrshire in 2004. The aim of the programme, which is funded by the Scottish Executive through Sportscotland, is to develop opportunities for increasing the level of physical activity undertaken by young people outwith the school curriculum.

A core team of Active School Co-ordinators and sporting volunteers is working to deliver 10 targets set for the programme, details of which were contained in the progress document appended to the report. The short term success of the programme was highlighted in the appended Active Schools Progress Report and the intended longer term benefits are as follows:-

- putting in place a systematic support for physical activity;
- developing the local capacity for providing physical activity; and
- helping provide lifelong opportunities to be physically active.

In view of the progress made across Scotland, the Scottish Executive has committed to continue funding until 2008.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 3.10 pm.